

that the appended materials are “essential material,” but desires that they be included in the application in case a challenger later takes a different view.)

An abstract (omitted from the original filing) is also included in the substitute specification.

The undersigned apologizes for the earlier, non-compliant, specification.

Rathus

Claims 1-4 stand rejected as anticipated by, or obvious in view of, Rathus (5,932,863). Reconsideration is requested.

Rathus does not use the term steganography, or the like. The excerpt cited in the Action states “*Printed matter 40 includes at least one machine-recognizable feature 41 in the printed work, such as a bar code, invisible bar code, magnetic code, printed character, symbol or pictorial icon, or other feature.*”

“Invisible bar code” is not detailed nor enabled.

Notwithstanding Rathus’ lack of enablement, applicant has amended the pending claims to make clear that, e.g., the plural bit data is decoded from scan data produced through use of visible light. Whatever “invisible bar code” means, it seems clear that it cannot be sensed from scan data produced through use of visible light. (Nor can a magnetic code, for that matter.)

Moreover, as to claim 2’s recitation of “tallying the number of decoded first and second data, respectively, to determine consumer response to the advertisements,” Rathus does not disclose such an arrangement (which is useful, e.g., in determining which of two advertisements for the same product is more effective). The excerpt cited from the specification does not disclose this claim element.

As to claim 4, Rathus does not teach any steganographic encoding of a travel photograph to hide plural-bit data therein. (Again, claim 4 has been clarified by reciting “acquiring visible light scan data from the travel photograph.”) Indeed, Rathus has no teaching of any photograph encoding. Moreover, while Rathus uses the word “travel” (col. 8, line 1), he uses it in the context of a printed travel schedule, rather than a photograph of a place that includes steganographic encoding that serves to link to a travel web site.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, withdrawal of the rejections based on Rathus is solicited.

Fajkowski

Claim 3 stands rejected as anticipated by Fajkowski, 5,905,246.

Fajkowski is understood to disclose a system in which consumers are identified by affinity cards now offered by some groceries (e.g., Safeway), and their shopping habits are monitored through tracking of purchased articles (using barcode scanning).

The subject matter of claim 3 does not seem to be disclosed on suggested by Fajkowski. In particular, Fajkowski does not teach or suggest "determining at the remote computer whether a prize should be awarded in response to submission of said decoded data." The cited columns 22-24 do not seem to have any disclosure on-point. Moreover, a full-text search of the patent specification found no instance of the words "prize" or "contest." Withdrawal of this rejection is thus requested.

Newly added claim 5 depends from claim 3 and specifies use of steganographic encoding.

Favorable action and passage to issuance are solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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